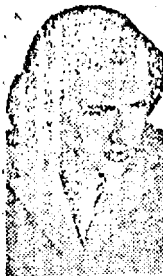


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Crisis Over Panama Stirs an Old Feud

By VIRGINIA PREWETT

The worsening Panama crisis has fanned into flames once more an old Washington feud — the behind-scenes struggle between the action and non-action groups over Cuba policy.

The Pentagon is angry over the Panama crisis as our military has rarely been before, and with good reason.

For Panama is making its issue the alleged brutal and atrocious attacks by our armed forces against Panamanians in the Jan. 9 riots.

INFILTRATION

And events in Panama are blazingly plain. President Roberto Chiari, while the Organization of American States Peace Committee was vainly trying to ameliorate matters, yielded to pressure exerted by his Ministry of Education, known to be communist infiltrated, and by committees formed at Panama University, also Red-infiltrated.

The American people are not yet fully aware of the way our military are being misrepresented thruout the world.

The State Department's typical impulse in the crisis was to "lower the tone", as one official described it to me.

SOFT PEDAL

This meant playing down even a denial of the Panamanian atrocity charges. When President Johnson at last denied the accusations, our "tone lowering" had left a vacuum that our enemies' din had filled for days.

Make no mistake, the U. S. is being prosecuted on horrifying charges. This is the significance of Panama's action in the OAS.

If President Chiari had taken his orders directly from Moscow, he could not have served them better.

For Venezuela is prosecuting Cuba in the OAS, and this was to be the big hemisphere showdown on Cuba's subversion in Latin America. But Panama's attack on the United States has stolen the show.

WARNING

The only thing that can be said for President Chiari is that he gave Washington fair warning.

He was one of six Central American presidents who told the late President Kennedy last March that Castro's subversion in their region was too much for them to handle, that something had to be done about Cuba. And nothing was.

The U. S. is steadily losing ground in the Panama crisis.

At first, Latin American diplomats said that the OAS would never vote to investigate Panama's atrocity charges.

'BETTER FOR U. S.'

But today the word is that it is "better for the United States" for the charges to be aired in the OAS rather than let them get to the United Nations.

This is the harsh reality: If the OAS votes to take up the Panamanian charges, this nation of ours is indicted before the world not for our "perpetual" canal treaty, but on the same criminal charges that horrified the world at the time Russian troops massacred Hungarian patriots.